

Message Text

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71-62

ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 INR-05 NSC-05 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2401

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS SF

SUBJ: VISIT TO ISRAEL OF PRIME MINISTER VORSTER

REF: CAPE TOWN 371

1. IN MY MEETING APRIL 5 WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON, I MENTIONED PRESS REPORT OF THE VISIT TO ISRAEL THIS WEEK OF SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER VORSTER AND ASKED HIM TO COMMENT. BEFORE RESPONDING, HE ASKED HOW I VIEWED VISIT. I SAID VISIT COULD SCARCILY HELP ISRAEL'S IMAGE ABROAD AND, INTER ALIA, MIGHT PREJUDICE ISRAELI HOPES OF REESTABLISHING CLOSER TIES WITH BLACK AFRICAN NATIONS.

2. ALLON TOLD ME IN CONFIDENCE THAT THE VISIT HAD CAUSED GOI SOME DIFFICULTIES. THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR HAD INFORMED HIM SOME MONTHS AGO THAT VORSTER WISHED VISIT ISRAEL ON A PERSONAL PILGRIMAGE. BECAUSE "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY NO TO A CHRISTIAN WHO WISHES TO VISIT THE HOLY LAND" AND BECAUSE OF GOOD ISRAELI/SOUTH AFRICAN RELATIONS AND CLOSE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL TIES, GOI FEELS IT HAS NOT ALTERNATIVE BUT TO WELCOME VORSTER.

3. ALLON SAID THE CONCERNS REGARDING ISRAELI RELATIONS WITH BLACK
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AFRICAN COUNTRIES ARE VALID. HE RECALLED THAT ISRAEL HAD

KEPT ITS TIES WITH SOUTH AFRICA AT A LOW LEVEL BECAUSE OF AFRICAN PRESSURES AND HE ADMITTED THAT SOME AFRICAN STATES MAY NOW USE THE VORSTER VISIT AS A EXCUSE FOR DELAYING THE RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

4. HE SAID SOUTH AFRICA HAS NOW ANNOUNCED THAT THE VORSTER TRIP IS MORE THAN JUST A PILGRIMAGE AND THAT HE IS BRINGING HIS FOREIGN MINISTER. ALLON IS EQUALLY WORRIED ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION IN EUROPE AND THE U.S. AS HE IS ABOUT THE AFRICAN STATES, SOME OF WHOM, IN ANY CASE, ARE SLOWLY BUT QUIETLY IMPROVING THEIR TIES WITH SOUTH AFRICA. HE SAID HE HAD NOT YET NOTED ANY REACTION ON THE PART OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES BUT HAS ALREADY SEEN EDITORIAL COMMENT IN WESTERN PRESS, ESPECIALLY BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN. THE VISIT IS PRESENTLY SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 8-11; IT IS NOT DESIGNATED AN OFFICIAL VISIT BUT VORSTER WILL BE A "GUEST OF PRIME MINISTER RABIN".
TOON

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